TABLE 3

FODDER DISTRIBUTED IN MATRUH SECTOR, 1963

654
233

	No. of Sheep	Kg. of Barley	Kg. of Cottonseed Cakes
al-Qasr	9,958	85,392	56,928
Total Distribution	144,804	1,303,236	868,824

the cooperative societies.

243 Barley is the important staple in al-Qasr: it is used for bread and fodder. About one-half or the Bedouins plant barley on a small scale. The wealthy individuals who own large flocks of sheep plant up to 100 acres of barley. Barley is planted in October and harvested at the end of April. Two methods of cultivation are used: plowing and seeding takes place either before the rains, i.e., the 'afiir system, or, after the rains, i.e., the haraati system. After harvesting, [251] the grain is threshed and stored in two-meter deep pits (matmuura). Grain stored in this fashion can be preserved for three years.

244 The main vegetables raised in al-Qasr are onions, radishes, peppers, and mint. Mint is the only dependable cash crop of those mentioned. It is used by the Bedouins [263] in tea, and tea drinking is a ceremony which takes place at [272] all times of the day in the desert.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

Those of the *barqa* plain may never camp on the plateau but they move freely between grazing grounds, permanent water supplies, and ploughland. 221 233

Of the plateau tribes, the Darsa, the 'Arafa, most of the Hasa, and a number of 'Abaidat and 'Awaqir sections remain there throughout the year. The Bedouin met with wandering about in the southern grazing grounds after the rains are the 'Abaidat Ghaith, 'Awakla, and Shahin, some of the Hasa Shabarqa and Bakhayit, the whole of the small *'Ailat* Fayid tribe, large numbers of Bara'asa Husain, Tamiya, and Masa'id, 'Abid Mansur and Jabar, 'Awaqir Sdaidi and Brahim, and numerous small client groups more or less affiliated to these tribal sections. The nomadic sections are generally richer than the others in sheep and camels, and are also more vigorous, independent, and warlike. Politically, they are the leading sections of the tribes to which they belong. The foremost Shaikhs of the 'Abaidat, Hasa, Bara'asa, 'Abid, 'Awaqir, and Magharba are all to be found during the rains farther away in the steppe than most of their fellow-tribesmen. 221 233 619

The move southwards starts in December after the barley has been sown, or part of a group may take the animals south while the rest finish the ploughing. Most of these semi-nomads return to the plateau in May, when water becomes scarce, but some, including some of the most powerful elements, remain to the south of it permanently. There are many advantages in this annual move to the south. Rain falls and the grasses spring up in advance of the plateau, and grazing is more abundant and of a better quality. On the other hand, the grasses of the plateau and its southern slopes are still green when the desert grasses, except in specially favoured depressions, are withered. By their annual oscillation the Bedouin thus give their animals the best grazing at all seasons of the year. Sheep mostly lamb round about November, which is the month in which new grasses spring up in the *barr*, so that the move southwards gives the sheep the richest grazing at a time when they need it most; and the warmer conditions prevailing in the south suit the lambs. At the same time, the Bedouin in southern grazing grounds are compelled to live very largely on milk food, and the combination of rich pastures with the dropping of their young by sheep, goats, and camels, enables them to live on the country to a great extent. 221 233 [243] • [262]

233 The grazing season extends between November and April. As the dry season advances, the flocks are moved northward to the cultivated lands so as to be nearer to fodder and to the waterholes which stand usually very close to the coastal zone. During the dry season, animals live mainly on barley straw and very little dry grass. In exceptionally bad years, the people are compelled to dispose of their animals or to sell some of them in order to be able to maintain the rest. In such years the shepherds find it necessary to cross the border to the permanent pasture of Cyrenaica in northeastern Libya, or to move to the Delta where they may purchase the right to graze in wheat fields after reaping the crop.

243 Grain crops, mainly barley, are also grown in the area. Depending on the rainfall, pockets of land characterized by deep alluvial soil and underground water at various depths are cultivated with barley and other grain crops. Barley cultivation is preferred by the people because it grows quickly and matures faster than wheat; also, it can be cultivated in a range of soils and climates; it is mostly used as animal feed. Barley straw is also used as fodder for animals. Because of the erratic nature of rainfall, barley production is hazardous in most of the region. For this reason, pastoralism remains the most important mode of subsistence, and cultivation becomes secondary. Cultivation is done on the basis of shifting cultivation, which means that the areas cultivated vary from one year to the next following the rainfall.

Land Tenure

423 Most of the cultivable lands, as well as the grazing lands, are under tribal occupation. Awlad Ali have, by custom and usage, had for

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

useful mostly for transport and ploughing, though they give a good milk yield and a fair harvest of wool. There are horses, of Berber rather than of Arab type, in every big camp. They are kept for the saddle alone, being much used in old days for hawking, and are a sign of wealth and social position.

The census figures for domesticated animals are probably highly inaccurate. The flocks and herds were certainly much greater, especially for camels and horses, before the Italians ravaged the country. The Turkish figures for 1910 were 713,000 sheep, 546,300 goats, 83,300 camels, 23,600 cattle, and 27,000 horses, and it has been reckoned that by 1933 these had been reduced to 98,000 sheep, 25,000 goats, 2,600 camels, 8,700 cattle, and 1,000 horses.[1] Before the outbreak of the second Italo-Sanusi war in 1923 the normal export to the markets of Egypt was 80,000 sheep and goats a year, and it was reckoned that a settled Cyrenaica could produce annually for export at least 100,000 to 150,000 sheep and goats and 6,000 camels. The country used to satisfy a considerable portion of Egypt's meat requirements. It also exported clarified butter in big quantities, 91,835 kilograms being the figure for 1922 and 75,462 the figure for 1923.[2]

Although the Bedouin are by practice and inclination shepherds first and cultivators afterwards, all plough. Barley and some wheat are a staple food. Indeed, in most years they cultivate a surplus of barley which they trade, and it may be said that for the most part they are self-supporting as far as their flour requirements go. On the southern slopes of the plateau and in the *barqa* plain ploughing begins from the middle of October to the middle of November, according to the rains. The coastal belt is sown a little later and the plateau in December and January when the grasses begin to sprout. By mid-April the first harvest, that of the *barqa* and the southern slopes of the plateau, is being reaped, and on the plateau reaping goes on from May to the end of August. Everywhere barley is sown greatly in excess of wheat, for wheaten bread is not considered a necessity and barley is required for horses as well as for men.

[1] Jean Despois, *La Colonisation Italienne en Libya: Problèmes et Méthodes*, 1935, p. 44; Hans w: son Ahlmann, *La Libia Settentrionale*, 1930, p. 78. (First published in 1928.)

[2] *L'Oltremare*, Mar. 1930; *Rivista delle Colonie Italiane*, 1934, p. 885; Francesco Coro, *Settantasei Anni di Dominazione Turca in Libia*, 1937, p. 82.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

243 They could not sow a better crop. There are wild varieties of barley in Cyrenaica and the country is in every way suited to its culture. It is very hardy, stands up to drought, and easily holds its own against the grasses, which are ploughed in with the seed on the plateau. When the barley and wheat have been reaped, the grain is stored in *kuf*. On the plateau these are ancient tomb-caves; elsewhere they are holes dug in the ground.

In a bad year, and even more in a succession of bad years, the Bedouin have experienced famine, but in most years the barley, and to a lesser extent the wheat, give an abundant yield. Bedouin have told me that they expect from sowing in the beds of wadis up to a hundredfold of barley and in the *barqa* up to fiftyfold. On the plateau the yield is smaller and in the Marmarica and Sirtica much smaller. In Turkish times there was a large export of grain from Cyrenaica. Mondaini says that it was to the mean annual value of 40,000 Lire Sterling for the years 1885 to 1900.[1] Much of this surplus was bought by English brewers.

The Bedouin way of life is well adapted to their environment. Given the inconstancy of the rainfall and the distribution of water supplies they would be foolish indeed were they not, at any rate in part, shepherds. They are not, of course, in all respects self-supporting. They make their winter tents and a good part of their equipment, carpets, sacks, and so forth, from the wool of their beasts, but some things the Bedouin regard as necessities have to be imported, notably tea, sugar, some rice, and cloth, especially the *jird*, the woollen cloak of the country. They trade these with surplus stock on the hoof, skins, wool, clarified butter, surplus barley, and honey and wax, so that they are in an economic sense self-supporting.

Cyrenaica is a rich country for Bedouin, a poor country for Europeans. Bedouin generally have no overhead expenses in production. I say generally, because rich men sometimes employ shepherds, though this is usually the practice of urban merchants engaged in the sheep trade. Bedouin use their own labour and that of their families and animals. What is perhaps more important is that they are prepared to live on what

[1] G. Mondaini, *Manuale di Storia e Legislazione Coloniale del Regno d'Italia*. 1927, p. 308.

7:Abou-Zeid E-5 (no date) 1959 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Egypt

105 livestock husbandry as their main occupation while the rest earn their living
162 by such other means as agriculture, fishing, stone-cutting, trade, etc. But whatever his main job may be, a man is likely to possess a number of sheep which he usually entrusts to a professional herdsman if he cannot look after them himself. This means that all sectors of the population have an active interest in livestock. Livestock, or rather sheep, are the most important and most esteemed item of wealth, and pastoral values still rank very high in spite of the obvious attraction of other types of work. On the other hand, pure nomadism is not practised, except perhaps by some small groups of camel-herders living in the far south of the area. The tremendous majority of the herdsmen are sheep-herders, whose movements are much more restricted than the movements of the real nomads. They have permanent settlements to which they retire when the grazing season is over, and there they practise agriculture, which they consider a secondary and supplementary occupation.

Most of the inhabitants of the Western Desert belong to the Awlad Ali clans who originally came from Libya. Some less important and less numerous clans, the Morabiteen clans, also live there as 'clients' of the more powerful Awlad Ali. A certain degree of correspondence exists between clan segmentation and the distribution of lands, both pasture-land and the fertile arable areas of the northern strip being distributed among clans and lineages in a clearly defined manner. A man cannot make use of the grazing ground, much less of the cultivation ground, known to belong to a different clan or lineage except under certain conditions and only obtaining the owners' permission. This does not mean, however, that clans and lineages are localized. For in spite of the natural tendency of kinsmen to cluster together and to live near to each other, the members of the same clan-segment may be widely dispersed, and the inhabitants of any specific locality, especially near the coast, usually belong to different clans. Nevertheless, a certain clan may be more strongly represented in a particular locality than all the other clans.

105 The problem of water supply is, naturally, the most crucial problem with
312 which the people have to cope. The absence of surface water, the shortness of the wet season, the low rainfall and the meagreness of the subterranean resources in most parts of the desert, especially inland, impose drastic limitations upon their activities. Apart from the few artesian wells found in the northern coastal zone, rain is the main source of water supply. It is, however, a very unreliable source because of its irregularity. Moreover, a considerable amount of rain-water is lost by seepage through the sand and by evaporation. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that not all the functioning wells yield potable water or even water suitable for the irrigation of fields. The water of a large number of these artesian wells is charged with a high percentage of dissolved salts. This water can only be used for domestic purposes. Certain experiments are now being carried out at Ras-el-Hikma and Fuka to see whether such saline water could be used for irrigating the pasture-lands.

105 The two main complementary occupations, i.e. livestock husbandry and
• 243 the cultivation of barley, are seriously affected by the water situation. The
311 strip of arable land which extends along the sea coast varies in breadth from place to place and from year to year according to the rainfall. In good years it may stretch some 10 to 20 kilometres southwards, but in bad years the cultivation becomes rather patchy and is confined to a very narrow strip only a few kilometres wide. The people are never sure of their crops, and in really

7:Abou-Zeid E-5 (no date) 1959 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Egypt

bad years the returns may be so poor that grain and flour have to be sent from the Delta to avert famine. The failure of the crop may also compel whole clan-segments to migrate with their animals to the Delta. In this respect, the semi-nomadic clans of the Western Desert represent a real burden on the national economy of Egypt.

Livestock husbandry, which is by far the most important and highly valued occupation, is itself subject to the variability and the erratic nature of rainfall, since it is the rain which determines the abundance of herbage and, consequently, the number of animals reared. Pasture land is found mainly to the south of the cultivated land. Sometimes, the fallow patches among the barley fields are also covered with grass and other pasture plants suitable for grazing. Pasture plants usually persist between December and May; during the summer, the land becomes arid hard desert with only few dispersed patches of dry grass. The grazing season *par excellence* is from November to April, during which period barley stands in the fields. After the first showers of November, barley is sown and the young men soon move with their flocks to the pastures, leaving the older people to look after the fields. As the dry season advances, the flocks are moved northwards to the cultivated lands so as to be nearer to fodder and to water-holes. Thus, the movements of the herders are rhythmic and regulated by the division of the year into two major seasons: the wet season and the dry season. The wet season is the period of plenty during which the animals are well fed; the dry season is the period of starvation for the flocks which must then rely on such fodder as barley straw and on the drying grass. Any movements of animals that may take place during that season are carried out on a very limited scale. In exceptionally bad years the people are compelled to dispose of their animals, or at least of a large part of the flocks, or they may send them away to their friends and relatives who may be living near vegetation. Sometimes, the herdsmen find themselves compelled to cross the frontiers to Cyrenaica for pasture.

We can see then from this brief account to what extent the water situation is responsible for determining the modes of living in the desert and for channelling human activities and imposing certain limitations on these activities. Development projects and sedentarization schemes planned for the Western Desert and its inhabitants must, therefore, give a great deal of importance to the question of water and its availability. In fact, most of the contemplated projects envisage the possibility of better exploitation of the existing water supplies as well as the tapping of potential resources.

Rightly or wrongly, it is generally assumed in Egypt that nomadism and semi-nomadism represent a phase of deterioration which is no longer compatible with the actualities of modern life and therefore should be abolished. For, apart from the fact that it is responsible for the hardships and insecurity suffered by the desert dwellers and the consequent ill effects on the national economy, especially in bad years, nomadism as practised in the Western Desert and under the prevailing circumstances is wasteful and destructive. Vast stretches of land which could be reclaimed at little cost and cultivated intensively are simply left for grazing without any serious endeavour to make better use of them. Under the contemplated sedentarization projects it is intended to increase the cultivated area, to improve the pastures by introducing new pasture plants of higher nutritive value in areas where agriculture is not

9: Murray E, K-3, 4 (ca. 1910-1935) 1935 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Egypt

Had the Senussi been successful in the last war, they would no doubt have brought in the 'Ibeidat or the 'Awaqir from Cyrenaica to replace the Awlad 'Ali in Egypt.

At the present day the Awlad 'Ali, especially the eastern sections near the Nile Valley, have almost ceased to be nomadic, and only the old men have memories of their former warlike habits. They suffered considerably during the Great War, but are again becoming prosperous. They now own large comfortable tents, are beginning to build houses and clear out cisterns, and are also said to be increasing in numbers.[1] So civilized have they grown that my guides, one a Sinai Arab and the other an 'Abadi, concurred in calling them "green"—not real desert-worthy Bedouins.

Perhaps as a result of Libyan influence, or more probably the better nurture and climate, they are taller, heavier, stronger, and lighter-complexioned than the lightly built Arabs of Sinai and Hijaz. Also they are much franker and more straightforward than their shifty and suspicious eastern cousins, and altogether more trustworthy. Their women only veil themselves to strangers, and talk quite naturally and cheerfully to the men of their own tribe.

They cultivate as much barley as they can, using a primitive plough drawn by camels, in the clayey hollows scattered over their very stony limestone desert, but, as the rainfall is very uncertain, a good crop only occurs every five or six years. After harvest, they exchange some of their barley for maize, which the women grind to make bread as required, and some for dried dates. The seed for next year is buried in a hole lined with straw and covered with clay, and a year's forage for the animals is set aside. The rest of the crop goes to market, and for a short time the Arab has money to buy clothes for himself and his family and at utmost need to pay off some of the numerous debts he has inherited from his forefathers. Soon he is reduced again to the clothes he wears, the tent he sleeps in, and his animals grazing in the desert.

They are great breeders of camels and sheep, and a busy traffic in these goes on weekly in the markets of Hammam, 'Amriya, and the Beheira. So they have got into the habit

[1] At the 1927 census, the Western Desert Arabs, Awlad 'Ali, Jawabis, etc., numbered 38,928 souls exclusive of those settled in Beheira. But Pacho, 100 years ago, estimated them at 38,000 souls.